

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 ARA-06 EA-07 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 OMB-01

ABF-01 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 SP-02 SS-15

NSC-05 L-03 /091 W

----- 073939

R 101650Z AUG 76

FM USMISSION GENEVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1814

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

USMISSION USUN NY

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VIENNA FOR IAEA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AORG, UN

SUBJECT: GENEVA GROUP-FRENCH PROPOSAL

SUMMARY. GENEVA GROUP ON AUG 5 HEARD FRENCH PRESENTATION ON PROPOSAL TO CONCERT IN ANNOUNCING BUDGETARY CEILINGS TO SECRETARIATS OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS BEFORE BUDGETS PREPARED, AGREED TO CIRCULATE FRENCH DOCUMENT OUTLINING PROPOSAL TO CAPITALS AND AGREED TO MEET IN FIRST HALF SEPTEMBER TO CONSIDER PROPOSAL IN LIGHT OF GUIDANCE FROM CAPITALS AND TO CONSIDER MEETING IN NEW YORK AT CONSULTATIVE LEVEL TO CONSIDER FURTHER STEPS BEFORE ACC AND CPC MEET IN FALL. QUESTION OF TREATY OBLIGATION ASPECT AND THAT OF APPROACH TO BUDGET LIMITS RATHER THAN CONSIDERATION OF PROGRAMS RECEIVED PRINCIPAL ATTENTION IN INITIAL GENEVA GROUP CONSIDERATION OF FRENCH DOCUMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. FRENCH PERMREP FERNAND-LAURENT PRESENTED TO GENEVA GROUP AUG 5 DOCUMENT PROPOSING CONCERTED ACTION TO ESTABLISH CEILINGS ON BUDGET GROWTHS (COPIES POUCHED IO FOR TOUSSAINT AND USUN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FOR MYERSON). AS BUDGETING RESTRAINT MECHANISMS WITHIN ORGANI-

ZATIONS HAVE NOT PROVEN CAPABLE OF EFFECTING THIS, FRENCH SEE NO ALTERNATIVE TO ANNOUNCEMENT BY GENEVA GROUP CONTRIBUTORS EARLY IN EACH BUDGET CYCLE OF ACCEPTABLE GROWTH FIGURES. FRENCH RECOGNIZE THAT CARE MUST BE TAKEN IN DOING SO TO AVOID POLEMICAL OR GEOGRAPHICAL CONFRONTATIONS, AND THAT UPWARD LIMIT WOULD HAVE TO BE DETERMINED ON CASE-BY-CASE BASIS (PERHAPS TAKING INTO ACCOUNT WHETHER INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS ARE ACCOMPLISHING ENDS NOT POSSIBLE ON NATIONAL BASIS.) UNDERLYING ARGUMENT IS THAT IT IS PREFERABLE THAT MINORITY EXPECTED TO FUND BULK OF BUDGETS SHOULD ANNOUNCE IN ADVANCE THE EXTENT OF ITS WILLINGNESS TO DO SO, RATHER THAN BE FORCES INTO POSITIONS OF UNILATERALLY REFUSING TO PAY.

2. FRENCH DOCUMENTS CONCLUDES THAT GOF SEEKS REACTIONS OF OTHER GENEVA GROUP MEMBERS TO THIS APPROACH, AND PROPOSES PERMREP CONSULTATION IN GENEVA BY MID-SEPTEMBER TO CONSIDER THIS. IF REACTIONS ARE FAVORABLE, FRENCH SUGGESTS SECOND GENEVA GROUP MEETING AT CONSULTATIVE LEVEL IN NEW YORK EARLY IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY BEFORE FALL MEETINGS OF ACC AND CPC.

3. GENEVA GROUP DELEGATIONS GENERALLY AVOIDED DETAILED CRITIQUE OF FRENCH PROPOSAL BUT RAISED QUESTIONS AS TO LEGAL GAMBIT WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE MANAGED IN SEEMING TO PRE-EMPT TREATY OBLIGATIONS TO PAY CONTRIBUTIONS WHICH MIGHT CONSTITUTIONALLY BE LEVIED. FERNAND-LAURENT SAID THAT HE BELIEVED FRENCH LEGAL ADVISERS HAD FOUND NO TECHNICAL VIOLATION OF TREATY OBLIGATIONS IN BARE FACT OF ANNOUNCING INDICATIVE CEILINGS BEFOREHAND, BUT UNDERTOOK TO CONFIRM GOF VIEW ON THIS. IN ANY EVENT, FRENCH PROPOSAL WOULD BE TO LEAVE THIS PROSPECT DELIBERATELY OBSCURE, AND AVOID PRESENTING "CEILINGS" AS THREAT OF REFUSAL TO PAY MORE. NEVERTHELESS QUESTIONING PERSISTED ON DIFFICULTY OF DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN "ANNOUNCEMENT" OF SUCH CEILINGS AND SWISS (BERN POLITICAL DEPARTMENT) REP CANDIDLY SUGGESTED THAT CONSEQUENCES THEN SHOULD BE INITIATION OF ACTION TO WITHDRAW. WHILE NETHERLANDS REP EXPECTED THE HAGUE WOULD INSIST ON ARRIVING AT CEILINGS FROM PROGRAM RATHER THAN BUDGETARY POINT OF VIEW, U.S. AND OTHERS POINTED OUT THAT THIS APPROACH DEMONSTRABLY HAD NOT WORKED AND THAT, INDEED, FAILURE OF PROGRAM EXAMINATION APPROACH HAD OCCASIONED FRENCH PROPOSAL. OTHERS SUGGESTED, HOWEVER, THAT MODIFICATION IN FRENCH PROPOSAL ALLOWING FOR COMBINATION OF BUDGETARY AND PROGRAM APPROACHES TO INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FINANCING MIGHT BE FEASIBLE AND DESIRABLE.

4. ACTION REQUESTED. MISSION WILL REQUIRE GUIDANCE FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESUMED GENEVA GROUP DISCUSSION (PROBABLY SECOND WEEK IN SEPTEMBER) OF FRENCH PROPOSAL. BELIEVE WE SHOULD HAVE (A) GUIDANCE ON POSSIBLE LEGAL COMPLICATIONS POSED BY FRENCH PROPOSAL, (B) VIEWS ON BUDGET CEILING VERSUS PROGRAM ANALYSIS APPROACHES TO CONTROLLING BUDGET GROWTH, AND (C) GUIDANCE ON WHETHER U.S.

WOULD BE PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE AT CONSULTATIVE LEVEL MEETING
IN NEW YORK, PRESUMABLY IN FIRST HALF OCTOBER. AS MISSION WILL
WISH TO BE IN POSITION TO DISCUSS HANDLING OF MATTER IN ADVANCE
WITH UK CO-CHAIRMAN AND FRENCH MISSION, REQUEST GUIDANCE ON
SUBSTANCE OF FRENCH PROPOSAL BY FIRST WEEK IN SEPTEMBER. CATTO

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976GENEVA06459
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760308-0099
From: GENEVA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760870/aaaaciry.tel
Line Count: 120
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION IO
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <29 MAR 2004 by greeneet>; APPROVED <03 AUG 2004 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GENEVA GROUP-FRENCH PROPOSAL SUMMARY. GENEVA GROUP ON AUG 5 HEARD FRENCH PRESENTATION ON PROPOSAL TO CONCERT IN ANNOUNCING BUDGETARY CEILIN
TAGS: AORG, UN
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006